

REMARKS

Claims 26-28, 31-33, 49-52, 56-60, 91 and 92 are presently pending in this application. Claims 26, 49 and 91 have been amended to further clarify aspects of these claims. No claims have been cancelled from the application in this paper.

Although the present communication may include amendments or other changes to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the owner does not concede in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The owner reserves the right to pursue any previously pending claims or other claims, whether broader or narrower, that are supported by the present disclosure under 35 U.S.C. § 112, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, any person reviewing the prosecution history of the present application, or the prosecution history of any parent or other related application, shall not reasonably infer that any subject matter supported by the present application has been disclaimed or disavowed.

A. Status of Office Action

All of the pending claims were rejected under Section 103 in the Office Action dated June 18, 2007. More specifically, the claims were rejected on the following grounds:

(a) Claims 26-28, 31-33 and 49-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,126,798 (Reid) and either U.S. Patent No. 6,228,232 or International Publication No. WO00/03067 (collectively identified as Woodruff); and

(b) Claims 55-60, 91 and 92 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Reid, Woodruff, and U.S. Patent No. 4,469,564 (Okinaka).

B. Response to Rejections

The rejections over the combination of Reid and Woodruff and the rejection over the combination of Reid, Woodruff and Okinaka are addressed together. More specifically, the undersigned representative would like to thank Examiner Zheng for holding a personal interview at the United States Patent and Trademark Conference on October 10, 2007. During this interview, Examiner Zheng and the undersigned representative discussed (a) claims 26, 49 and 91, and (b) the Reid and Woodruff references. The Examiner provisionally agreed that amended claims 26, 49 and 91 overcome the rejections based upon Reid and Woodruff. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of the pending claims over the combinations based on Reid and Woodruff.

In light of the foregoing, all the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the references of record. The applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. If Examiner Zheng has any questions or believes a teleconference would expedite prosecution of the present application, she is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at (206) 359-3258.

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Respectfully submitted,

By PJP/h
Paul T. Parker
Registration No.: 38,264
PERKINS COIE LLP
P.O. Box 1247
Seattle, Washington 98111-1247
(206) 359-8000
(206) 359-7198 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant